

THE AMERICAN NATIONAL PREACHER.

No. 5. VOL. XVII.]

MAY, 1843.

[WHOLE No. 197.]

SERMON CCCXLIX.

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THE TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS; AS OPPOSED TO THE MODERN THEORY OF SECOND ADVENTISM.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."—John xii. 32.

We have fallen on strange times. And yet not entirely strange; for ever since the melancholy disaster in Paradise, man has been prone to morbid excitements. The present is one of the points, in the wheels of revolution, at which this weakness of our fallen nature is very strongly developed. Not on one subject only, but on all, there is an impetuous rush of feeling, in which passion overleaps reason, and a fiery haste to *do*, prevents the calm pause to *think*. The mass of men seem now to be moved, not so much by the *intrinsic truth* and *importance* of subjects, as by the quantity and violence of *urgencies* with which they are pressed upon them. The most clamorous are the most influential. Such is the passion for *excitement*, that they who would take time to study coolly, and think soundly, must hie into a corner and bear the reproach of inefficiency, while the storm around is playing its noisy part and passing away.

At such a time, how cheering to hear the familiar voice of that well-tried and glorious Friend, speaking from a higher world, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." This is none other than our divine Saviour. He was to be lifted up upon the cross. And as thus lifted up, a bleeding victim for the sins of the world, he was to draw all men unto him. Here, in the cross of Christ, is the realization of the beautiful theory of the oneness of truth—that truth which is but the "stirring of the great mind of the universe." Observe the language—*draw*—indicating something *attractive* in Christ crucified:—something that would catch the eye, and captivate the hearts of all men.

The sentiment is clearly this:—*The cross of Christ is to gain a moral triumph over all the world.*

I here announce this as an antagonist doctrine to the recent second-advent theory. The former teaches that God is to purify the world from sin by the power of the *cross*, the latter that he is to do it by the power of *fire*. The one is a moral agency, and a moral result; the other a physical agency, and a physical result. In the latter case moral government is virtually, as connected with the cross, abandoned; in the former, it is carried on to glorious consummation. If God must needs interpose *fire*, to do what the cross was to do—purify the world from sin—then the cross is defeated. It is as if a king should employ very expensive means to reclaim a rebellious city, and give out that he shall surely succeed, but finding himself foiled in the attempt, should conclude to set fire to it and burn the inhabitants up.

God once destroyed the world with a flood. He then promised that he would no more destroy the world; in token whereof he set his *bow* in the cloud. That bow anticipated the cross, and the cross proclaimed *redemption*, not destruction. Nor were the consuming fires of the last day to kindle on the earth, *until* Christ had by his cross *drawn all men unto him*, and the jubilant shout of earth's redeemed millions had ascended to heaven through long ages of millennial glory.

Every student of the Bible must have observed that it is a book having very little to do with mathematics. Yet our modern theorists have ten times as much to do with mathematical calculations upon the prophecies, as with the cross of Christ. The arithmetic of the Bible is mainly the arithmetic of the cross; and it is principally concerned in computing the *value* of that cross, as learned from the dignity of its victim and the glory of its results.

In the *drawing* of men to Christ, as lifted up upon the cross, the following facts are to be distinctly noticed.

I. There was to be no *miraculous* agency. Nothing arresting or contravening the established laws of nature. The wheels of nature were to move their steady rounds, until the triumphs of the cross were fully achieved. Miracles were interposed to put the seal of God upon his holy religion, but not to extend its dominions from age to age; for a perpetual miracle would defeat itself. It would cease to be a miracle.

II. This drawing to Christ was to be effected through the agency of those heavenly *truths* which cluster about the cross. The cross of Jesus was to be the central point of radiation, whence the subduing light was to go forth. The cross said, "Let there be *light*,"—"and there *was* light." The bright developement of the character of God, as a being of infinite justice, mercy, and truth; the awful malignity of sin, as illustrated in the agonies of Jesus; the amazing value of the soul, as seen in the price paid for its redemption; the immortality

of man; and the endless destinies of weal or woe pending on his relation to God,—these are the truths which, radiating from the cross, were to seize on the hearts of men and draw them to Christ.

III. These truths were to be made *effectual* by the Holy Ghost, whose influence is secured and sent down to men by virtue of the cross. Christ declared to his disciples, that as the fruit of his death and ascension, the Holy Ghost should be given, to reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come. Accordingly the Holy Ghost *was* given, in greater measure after the ascension than ever before, and has through all ages accompanied the gospel and drawn men to Christ. His influence will be given in greater and greater measure, as the millenium advances;—he will come down like rain on mown grass, like the soft and warm showers of a summer evening that water the earth. Then will the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace, so long as the sun and the moon endure.

IV. This was to be a *gradual* work. Our Saviour compares it to the operation of *leaven*, which a woman hid in three measures of meal till all was leavened. He also compares it to the process by which the *mustard* seed rises from the smallest beginning to a stately tree. There are times when the leaven, subjected to unusual heat, operates more rapidly than at others; there are times when the tree, feeling the refreshing influence of the warm rain and sun-beams, starts forth as with a fresh life;—it has its winter and its summer,—but the general law of progression maintains. And thus the triumphs of the cross, retarded now, and now again moving with fresh impulse, are on the whole making progress from age to age. Sometimes a nation is, as it were, born in a day—as in the case of the Sandwich Islands. This, however, is only when things have ripened for the issue, by a gradual process.

V. In this drawing to Christ, no *other* than *moral* means were to be employed. It was for Mahomet to take the sword, for the Brahmin to wield the terrors of cast, and for the Roman pontiff to light the fires of the stake; but it was for the heralds of the cross, unarmed with carnal weapons and with carnal sophistries, to proclaim *Christ crucified*—the wisdom and the power of God for salvation. They who should take the sword, were to perish by the sword. The proud terrors of cast should be brought to the dust;—the fires of persecution should leap back on the kindler, and devour him;—and all the crafty should be finally caught in their own craftiness. While the friends of the cross were to go humbly forth, making known to men the love of a dying Saviour. And never have they swerved from this course, but they have brought reproach on the cross, and evil on their own heads. Not even the glitter of *wealth* is allowed to share the honor of human salvation. It is a cross of *wood*, not of *gold*, that is to save the world.

VI. This drawing to Christ was to be effected in a *calm* and *noiseless* way. There was to be no flourish of trumpets, no ostentatious parade, no voice of strife. Neither Christ, nor his herald, should strive nor cry, neither should any man hear his voice in the streets. With the calm energy of Omnipotence, he should send forth judgment unto victory, and in his name should the Gentiles trust. How like this are all God's *other* works of blessing. How noiselessly does the sun rise, and pour his beams over the world;—how calmly do the wheels of nature move round;—how gently does the acorn start from the earth, and rise in spreading branches to heaven. Such is the *modesty*, so to speak, of God's way,—such the beautiful “hiding of his power.”

And how *unlike* this, are the noisy and disorderly movements of second adventism. In the benign work of drawing men to the cross, the Lord is not in the wind, nor in the fire, nor in the earthquake, but *in the still small voice*. It is the gentle whisper of the cross—mild, tender, subduing.

VII. This drawing to Christ was to be *effectual*, and, ultimately, *universal*. My word *shall not* return unto me void, saith Jehovah, it *shall accomplish* the end for which I sent it. Although *Israel* be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious, saith Christ, in the eyes of Jehovah. The Gentiles should come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising. Ages might elapse before the complete triumph should be gained;—multitudes, offended at the cross, and following the example of stubborn Jews, might wonder and despise, and perish,—but they would only destroy themselves. The vict' ories of the cross would ride over the opposer's head and grind him to powder, in their ongoings to complete and universal triumph. And I, if I be lifted up, said Christ, *will draw all men unto me*. This has unquestionable reference to the fulfilment of prophecy respecting the *ultimate triumph* of the cross. Just as if it should be said, that a victorious king will surely succeed in subduing a *whole nation* of rebels, although many of the incorrigible would perish in the struggle.

Jehovah even takes his most solemn *oath* on this subject:—*As I live*, saith the Lord, *every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess. All people and kindred and tongues shall come and worship, and bow down before him*. The knowledge of the Lord shall *fill the whole earth*, as the waters fill the seas. None shall have occasion to say unto another, Know ye the Lord; for *all* shall know him, from the greatest unto the least. The Lord shall make bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and *all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God*.

Now every student of history must know that these prophecies *have not been fulfilled*. Hence, if the Bible be God's book—if the doctrine of the cross be true—the modern theory of second adventism cannot possibly be true.

That theory is briefly this:—that sometime in this year, 1843, Je-

us Christ will come in the clouds of heaven—raise the righteous dead and take them up, with the living believers, to be with himself in the air; while he burns up the world and all the unbelieving in it:—that the world, thus *purified by fire*—not by the cross—will be made into a beautiful habitation:—that the New Jerusalem, a literal city, with walls fifteen hundred miles long, fifteen hundred miles broad, and fifteen hundred miles high, will descend from heaven upon it:—that Christ, and saints and angels, will also descend and dwell in that city, and, with the righteous of the earth, reign a thousand years. After that, the wicked, who have lain for a thousand years as ashes under the feet of the righteous, will be raised, judged, and sent to hell, or devoured by fire from the Lord out of heaven.

Now all this is in *direct contradiction* to the scriptural *doctrine of the cross*, which we have been exhibiting. It is equally in contradiction to the *whole course of Providence*.

Science teaches us, that the Creator was for a very long period engaged in preparing the earth for man,—that by the slow process of ages he stowed away those vast treasures of coal, minerals, and metals, which we have but just *begun* to use, and which were clearly designed to minister to the wants of our race in the populous and prolonged ages of the millenium. History informs us that the *sciences and arts* have, as it were, but just *emerged* into day, and come forth to the service of the cross. Navigation, the application of steam, the principles and facilities of universal commerce, and especially that most important of all arts to the cause of Christ—printing—are of very recent origin. All things, in the course of Providence, perfectly harmonize with the views we have taken of the *gradual conquest and ultimate triumph of the cross*. The great law of God's kingdom, both in the natural and moral world, is one of gradual progression.

It may be incumbent on us briefly to state here, wherein lies the error of that strange theory respecting the destruction of the world in 1843. It lies not in the *inference*, but in the *premise*. Grant the premise, and the inference follows. The data being given, every school boy can figure it out;—but it is quite another thing to go to the bottom of the subject, and settle the data themselves on a sound exegetical scripture basis. The errors of the premise are an unauthorised use of numbers, and a mixing together of prophecies that are distinct. The two thousand three hundred *days* of Daniel, are made to mean so many *years*. There are some instances in the Bible, in which days are used, figuratively, to signify years, and even generations and ages; but there is no proof that they are so used here. There is abundant proof to the contrary. Supposing days to mean years, the advocates of this theory have only to subtract from two thousand three hundred years four hundred and fifty-seven years, the number of years before Christ when Daniel prophesied, and the remainder is 1843,—the year of our Lord, when it is claimed that the great cleansing of the world by fire is to take place. It is also said,

that the seventy *weeks* of Daniel mean seven times seventy—that is, four hundred and ninety *years*—the period to elapse from the time of Daniel to the crucifixion of Christ.

Now the fallacy is, that the two thousand three hundred days have not here a *figurative*, but a *literal* meaning. They mean not *years*, but *days*;—and instead of referring to the cleansing of the *world* by *fire*, they refer to the cleansing of the Jewish *temple*, by Judas Macabecus;—which took place 165 B. C., and two thousand three hundred days, or a little more than six and a half years after the “desolation” of the sanctuary, to which the prophet refers. The words of Daniel are, “How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot. And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred *days*; then shall the *sanctuary* be *cleansed*.” Take the prophet as he *says*, and all is plain.

The other error lies in confounding prophecies that are distinct. It should be here remarked, that the truths of God lie in the Bible very much as do his gifts in nature:—We find a strata of mineral lying close by the side of a metallic strata;—we find a diamond sparkling in a bed of rough earth;—substances totally unlike, and having respect in their creation to widely different ends, are thus placed by God in juxtaposition. Wise reasons for this may be shown, but our present discourse is not the place for them.

Suffice it to say, that the prophecies lie in the Bible in this manner; and it is impossible to see them in their precise nature and bearings, without a careful study of the genius and structure of the original Hebrew. Hence, no man should undertake to be a public teacher of that most delicate and difficult of all subjects—the prophecies—without a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures in their original languages.

Let us here state a single principle of the prophetic Scriptures, which may be obvious to all:—Between two distinct prophecies, which lie by the side of each other, there is usually one or more points of resemblance, making the first a type of the second. Thus the reign of Solomon, typifies that of Christ; the destruction of Jerusalem, the end of the world, &c. Hence these prophecies are found in juxtaposition, the one sliding into the other, as in the seventy-second Psalm, and in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. The same principle applies to the prophecies of Daniel. Prophecies respecting the temporal troubles and deliverances of the Jews, respecting the desolations and restorations of the temple, respecting the coming and death of Christ, are connected with others referring to the final consummation, when the dead shall awake from their graves, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt; when “they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars, for ever and ever.” By not regarding this principle, and thus confounding things that are distinct, men have been left, at other periods, as well as the present,

to form those idle theories respecting the end of the world, which have wrought such evil.

In this way the end of the world was predicted to take place in A. D. 365, from the scripture which records that Christ, after reading of the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Considering this a prophetic *year*, many imagined that the day of vengeance, or day of judgment, would immediately follow the termination of the 365th year. The general panic was awful. The ordinary pursuits of life were abandoned;—some rushed upon suicide; and others even sacrificed their own children. Such are the bitter fruits of error and fanaticism. It is by a similar mode of calculation, that the present second-advent theory is made out. The morbid passion for excitement, unbridled imagination, love of the marvellous, dethrone reason, and carry judgment away as with a tempest. This, however, is said with all due tenderness and respect;—for many of the subjects of this delusion are among our most excellent citizens and fellow-Christians. Some of them it may permanently injure, but with most it will soon pass harmlessly away.

A similar panic, respecting the end of the world, occurred in the year 1000. Mr. Mosheim says—"Among the opinions which took possession of the minds of men, none occasioned such a universal panic, nor such dreadful impressions of terror and dismay, as a notion that now prevailed, of the immediate approach of the day of judgment. They imagined that St. John had clearly foretold, that after a thousand years from the birth of Christ, Satan was to be let loose from his prison, and the conflagration of the world to follow. Hence prodigious numbers of people abandoned all the civil connexions and their parental relations, and giving over to the churches and monasteries all their lands, treasures, and worldly effects, repaired with the utmost precipitation to Palestine, where they imagined Christ would descend.—When an eclipse of the sun or moon happened to be visible, the cities were deserted, and their miserable inhabitants fled for refuge to caverns, and hid themselves among the craggy rocks, and under the bending summits of steep mountains. In many places, temples, palaces, and noble edifices, both public and private, were suffered to decay;—they were even pulled down, from a notion that they were no longer of any use, since the final dissolution of all things was at hand. In a word, no language is sufficient to express the confusion and despair that tormented the minds of these miserable mortals on this occasion."

Similar panics have been experienced at other periods of time. Still we are asked—What evil can the modern theory respecting the end of the world do? We answer, much, every way; chiefly, because men are saved by *truth*, not by *error*. But, it is asked, Should we not be *always* ready? True, but not always in *expectation* of an *immediate* end, when that end is obviously remote.

God has made all things beautiful *in their place*. We ought to be

ready to die, within *one hour*; but we ought not to *expect* to die in one hour, and make our calculations accordingly. Suppose all men were to be under the perpetual expectation of dying in one hour? What would become of the world? And so all men ought to be *ready* for the judgment day; but suppose all men were to be in *actual expectation* of it, within one month? Suppose all the world were to believe this modern theory of second-adventism:—The earth would be filled with maniacs. God gives to the Christian dying grace for the dying hour; and when that great and awful event—the conflagration of the world—shall actually come, it will be after Christians have received the appropriate grace for it, in the long ages of millennial glory. With entire composure they will then be able to look down, as from the pavillion of Jehovah, on a burning world.

Nor is this all. To have the mind so intensely absorbed with the single idea of the speedy destruction of the world, is to divert it from the essential duties of *religion*, as well as of social life. The single point comes to be, to believe this theory;—there is no repentance of sin, no regeneration of heart, no drawing of men to the *cross of Christ*. The great and beneficent design of the gospel is defeated. The cross is set aside, and another agent is looked to.

In conclusion, what are we taught respecting the end of the world? I cannot find that the *time* of the end is any where made known in the Bible. Indeed, we are expressly informed that no man shall know it. That Christ will finally come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, to consume the world, and assemble the whole race of man to judgment, is clearly revealed; but *when* that will be, God has, for wise reasons, concealed among the secrets of his own mind. We have seen, however, that great and prolonged events are yet to precede it. A mighty roll of glorious prophecies remains to be fulfilled. Many ages are yet to pass away. The world is in its infancy. It has scarcely begun to speak and go alone; it has not fully learned its alphabet. Our convictions are continually gaining strength, from every view of the subject, that the cross of Jesus is to stand high in the eyes of the world, and sway a glorious dominion over it, for very many ages longer than the earth has yet stood. If we may so speak, the cross of Christ is but just beginning to educate the infant world, for a prolonged and vigorous manhood of holy service. And there shall be no disappointment; FOR THIS IS OF GOD.

“Jesus SHALL reign where’er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run,
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till suns shall rise and set no more.”

Long enough will the cross have dominion over a ransomed world, to do ample justice to the blood of Christ, and satisfy the large desires of his benevolent heart. He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied; he shall *prolong* his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah

shall prosper in his hands.* What more could we ask? What else desire to anticipate? And for what other end could we wish to live? The grave will soon receive our dust, but not our spirits, nor our influence. If faithful to Christ, the former will be with him in the sphere of brighter visions and more blessed activities, awaiting the glorious consummation; the latter will be descending the stream of time, carrying blessings to unborn ages.

O, Jesus, teach us by thy cross to live for thee! Farewell, forever, all selfish aims, all lying vanities. Drawn to thy blessed cross, by chords of love, may we cast down all our burdens and our attainments together there, that whether living we may live to thee, or dying, die to thee, that living or dying we may be thine. Amen.

* Isaiah, 53.

SERMON CCCL.

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MISSIONARIES PURIFIED BY AFFLICTION.

PREACHED AT PONTIANAK, ON SABBATH, JUNE 26, 1842, TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE BORNEO MISSION, AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.*

"Behold I have refined thee but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."—Isaiah xlviii. 10.

IN the world ye shall have tribulation. Such is the heritage of the saints upon the earth. It applies to all God's people, particularly to his dearest children, and pre-eminently to those designed to become instruments of great and extensive good. This principle is strikingly illustrated in the lives of the patriarchs and prophets. The most touching incidents in the history of Abraham and Joseph, of Moses and David come directly in point. But the whole course of discipline through which the ancient church was called to pass, both in the wilderness and in the promised land, may justly be adduced for the same purpose. Indeed it is evidently to this that our text has more especial reference. Even God's eternal Son was not excepted from the operation of the rule. "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." True, the specific object may be, and doubtless often is different, and sometimes widely different, as in the case of the Savior, compared with believers. But in regard to the latter, with whom we are now chiefly concerned, the general reason is obvious. It is thus they are

* The following was the resolution of the Mission:—"Resolved, That the sermon of Brother Thomson, furnished at our request, be sent to the Editor of the National Preacher, with a request that it be published, and a copy sent to as many Mission Stations as known and practicable."

"Pontianak, Sept. 17, 1842."

purified from the dross of sin. It is thus they are freed from the elements of earthliness. It is thus they are refined and made not only susceptible of a warmer sympathy or fellow-feeling for the wretched, but actually more holy, more harmless, more entirely and sincerely devoted to the service and glory of God, in a word, more like their blessed Master. For it is only as they reflect his image that they can please God or benefit their fellow-men.

The process is often dreadfully severe, though always tempered to the weakness of our nature and carried on gradually so as not to overwhelm us at once, by the suddenness and awfulness of the change it is to produce. This cannot be effected at a single stroke. Should He immediately finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, the spirit would fail before him and the souls which he has made. But He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust. Hence, He says: "Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver," that is, not in the way in which silver is refined.

It is well known that the precious metals, and especially silver, require the most intense and searching power of fire to purge away their impurities; such devouring heat in fact as will infallibly consume all but the essential unadulterated mass. This is an emblem of the final test to be applied in the judgment. But happily our God and Savior has a more penetrating eye, and a more exquisite discernment than the most skilful artificer in gold and silver. He can perceive the faintest traces of his own likeness, not only before the process of refining is complete, but as soon as they are impressed upon the soul so that He can try, approve, and choose in the furnace of affliction, and need not leave the decision either for himself or for us to the more fiery ordeal of the judgment. Then He will satisfy the universe. But He always satisfies himself before, and is willing to afford us all the benefit of his divine satisfaction.

To secure this result, however, those whom the hand of God has touched should hear the rod and who hath appointed it. We must attend to the voice of God in our afflictions. Leaving out of view all second causes, we must see and acknowledge his sovereign right and power alone in these things, and then with all humility, meekness, and docility, enquire wherefore He is thus contending with us? what is the cause of the chastisement? what is the design of our Father in its infliction? This is necessary in order to view the dispensation aright, and especially to turn it to his glory and the profit of our own souls.

I. I need not say, dear brethren, that I have a special aim in bringing this subject to your consideration on the present occasion. It is no new reflection that the hand of God is upon us. From the commencement of our mission to this very day, one wave of trouble has rolled quickly upon another till it seems almost as if we were at last to be swallowed up, and no trace of our existence to be left but the

sad and cheerless record of our blasted hopes and unrealized anticipations. The fair fields of labor we expected to enter have been shut and barred against us. Our forces have been scattered, and our energies enfeebled. After a lapse of five years, during which our original number has been almost doubled by new recruits, those remaining in the field are even less than the first company which arrived. Truly we have been sifted like wheat. Some have been forced away by unconquerable bodily disease, and one by the more inveterate maladies of the soul. Sickness has entered every house, and death has snatched a victim from almost every family. The infant has been taken from its mother's breast, and the mother has been called to leave her sucking child in the hand of strangers. The sweet home of the husband and father has been made desolate, and his heart-strings rent by the pangs of separation from the wife of his youth and the object of his tenderest attachment; he has been doomed to sit and sigh in the weeds of widowhood. Yes, "I am the man that hath" thus "seen affliction by the rod of his wrath." Even now, when we were beginning fondly to hope that the Lord would turn our captivity as the streams in the south, and to pray, with some confidence of expectation: "Save, now, we beseech thee, O Lord! O Lord! we beseech thee now send prosperity," the knell of death has again reached our ears, and one on whom we calculated with the utmost assurance to come and cheer us on our way, and help us in our work, has been taken to another sphere, and called to the performance of other duties. Yes, Stryker, who panted to be with us, to see our faces in the flesh; to joy and sorrow, to labor and suffer with us, has taken his flight from earth and entered the world of spirits!

But we have not merely suffered among ourselves. The cause to which we are devoted has, in the same period, experienced the saddest reverses. I do not refer now so particularly to the disappointment and disaster which has attended the most enlarged plans and the most vigorous endeavors to establish and sustain individual missions, though these are by no means unworthy of consideration, but to the general barrenness of those results of missionary labor which are most of all to be desired, together with the severe and repeated checks which have impeded the operations of the whole scheme, and the awful shocks to which the entire system of means and measures has, in consequence, been subjected.

I am well aware that great and distinguished mercies have been mingled with our cup of adversity. Our cause, while made to suffer so grievously in some respects, has been most abundantly favored in others. While plans have been thwarted, operations trammelled, and missions broken up in one quarter, in another the Spirit has been marvellously poured out, and souls in unwonted numbers have been gathered into the kingdom. Nor have we ourselves, though contending with an almost unremitted tide of afflictions, been deserted in the conflict, or left without marked tokens of the Divine regard. Many

a wound which pierced to the quick has been graciously healed. The breach, which seemed heaven-wide, has been mysteriously closed. Apparent evil has been converted into certain good. And in a thousand ways the Lord has been declaring himself ready to turn and repent, and leave a blessing behind.

Yet who can look at all the various and continued chastisements of his hand without something more than a suspicion that He is still contending with us? that He sees much which is wrong in our principles, our feelings, or our conduct? and that He means to refine us in the furnace before He gives us the most divine success in our work?

Let us then endeavor to take these things deeply to heart, and to this end:—

II. Humbly call to mind and contemplate, at least, some of the causes which we may suppose have induced those fatherly rebukes which we have experienced.

But the question we shall thus be called to answer embraces too many points of serious moment to be treated, at large, in a single discourse. The most that can be expected of us will be to suggest topics of solemn reflection, rather than to discuss the merits of the case. Nor even, with this limitation in view, do we intend to survey the whole ground. It may easily be that the church is as deeply interested as her messengers, in the secret reasons of our common calamities. But while we consider ourselves in a deeply interesting and holy sense one with the church, and would keep the chords of sympathy between us always vibrative, and always tender, yet isolated as we are in situation, though not in heart, we are ill qualified to judge either of character or conduct at home, nor would the office of censors at all beseech us if ever so well qualified. We take it for granted the church in all her various tribes and sections will devoutly ponder the same momentous question, but as it will behove all "to mourn apart," not only sectionally, but individually, so we consider it our especial province to examine, apply, and improve the subject as missionaries.

Until we have thus cleared ourselves, we have no right even to think the difficulty is elsewhere. Indeed, notwithstanding it is a matter of common concern, and must be canvassed as such, each individual should be very sure it is not in himself before he imputes it to others, lest, at the very moment he condemns the offender, the Judge of all should thunder in his guilty soul: "Thou art the man!"

Such is the spirit in which I desire to present this topic to your solemn consideration, and while, with great diffidence, offering my reflections for common profit, I would fain have my own heart alive to every searching truth and every awakening sentiment which may be uttered.

At the same time, it is not my design to be personal, and therefore,

I shall not confine myself to the more glaring faults of individuals, or to the inconsistencies and sins which have come to light in our own little community, but taking an enlarged and comprehensive view of facts, circumstances, and characters, within the field of observation just defined, endeavor to turn your thoughts to those hidden springs of action, from which all our mistakes and follies proceed, and which we may consequently regard as those roots of bitterness which Infinite Wisdom means to extract by the instrumentality of affliction, accompanied by the living energies of his own Spirit. And,

1. I would notice the want of holiness of heart. By holiness is meant universal purity. In God, this is absolute; in his people here, at least, it is only comparative, though if they live the religion they profess, however it may sometimes fail in practice, it will be perfect in principle, in purpose, and in effort. It implies then the hearty renunciation of all sin, a sincere aversion to it in every perceptible form, and a living, active, and ardent desire to avoid it in ourselves, and discountenance and oppose it in all around us. It supposes our motives to be simple, disinterested, and spiritual, and all our conduct to be governed by a supreme regard for the glory of God, and the good of his creatures. Thus it raises the soul above the contagion of earthliness, and assimilates it to the atmosphere of heaven. But while it elevates the affections, it softens the feelings, and humbles the carriage. It exerts a mellowing influence on all the features of the character. Indeed, it draws out, heightens, and brightens, every christian grace and accomplishment. Hence, you will readily perceive it fits its subjects for every good word and work, and that without the savor of this salt we are actually good for nothing. How then does the state of our hearts and the conduct of our lives harmonize with this grand requisite of duty, devotion, and usefulness? If weighed in the balance, shall we not be found wanting? O let us be honest with ourselves, let us look into our hearts, let us scrutinize our motives, let us bring our thoughts, our feelings, our words, our actions, to the test of truth, to the touchstone of spiritual purity, of genuine holiness. Without holiness no man can see the Lord. Nor can we expect, without holiness, to lead others to the contemplation of his glory. The idea is as absurd as the end will be fruitless. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord. This is the divine injunction. Be it then our constant care to perfect holiness in the fear of God. If we do not, there will remain naught but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. Then He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and though we ourselves should be saved, all our works performed in worldliness, and stained with sin, will assuredly be burned up.

2. Out of this defect, supposing it to exist, will naturally spring a feeling of self-importance and self-complacency, than which nothing can be more displeasing to God, exert a more withering influence upon the soul, or more surely blight every prospect of spiritual use-

fulness. And, unhappily, if the needful safeguard is thus lacking, the very nature of our work is calculated to foster the development and growth of this deadly poison.

The conversion of the world is the noblest enterprise which can engage the powers of man. Nor has its moral grandeur been hidden from the discerning mind or left to spend its force upon the more wise and pious few, who could be quickened by its heavenly glory without being dazzled by its unearthly splendor. It has been made the theme of the pious orator, and the effulgence of its praises has blazoned from the sacred desk. Placed in proud contrast with all that is magnificent in nature, and all that is sublime in sentiment, its high and commanding superiority, has challenged the admiration of the good and great of every name. It is, in fact, so far as our knowledge extends, the great work of the great God. What an honor then for any mortal to co-operate in its execution! Whose bosom would not heave with conscious elevation at the thought of being associated with it even in the humblest way? This is natural, but, O, how dangerous. Great grace is needed to maintain our balance at such a giddy height. And to increase the peril, especially of the youthful missionary, a quite needless, and altogether unwarranted, line of distinction has sometimes been drawn between him and the pastors of the churches at home, as if they were not really engaged in the same work, and provided they are in their proper sphere, and perform their duties with humility, diligence, and zeal, occupying a post as honorable, and achieving results as glorious as the most distinguished ambassadors of Christ to the heathen. Hence it becomes so easy to substitute our connection with the missionary enterprise for fidelity in its prosecution, and imagine it is enough to have enlisted under the banner of the cross, though we should never fight the battles of the Lord. Nay, we may even flatter ourselves with the idea that the zeal we have shown, and the sacrifices we have made in giving ourselves to this work, cannot be more than compensated by any measure of self-indulgence accessible in the field, or any degree of arrogance in our conduct towards our fellow-laborers. Thus a wide door is opened for the admission of anger, discord, dissension, and all uncharitableness. Only let one person think of himself more highly than he ought to think, and consequently love to have the pre-eminence, and what a fire may be kindled even amongst the least combustible materials!

Another no less baneful consequence of the same spirit, is a disposition to look more at the splendor of plans, and the grandeur of undertakings, than at the power of carrying them into execution, or the particular indications of Providence, and other circumstances which ought to govern our decisions and direct the employment of our energies. Am I venting suspicions without the bounds of probability? Alas, I have heard things in this connection which make me blush for the motives of missionaries.

It is well for us to do great things when God puts it in the power of our hands to do them; but wo to us if we vainly attempt great things simply because they are great, without regard to our peculiar situation and the calls of duty from other quarters. Far better were it for us to remain contented in an humbler sphere than thus to provoke the wrath of heaven, by seeking our own instead of the things which are Jesus Christ's. Seekest thou great things for thyself, seek them not. Our real glory is to annihilate self. Our highest interest is to be willing to be any thing, in order to glorify God, to honor Christ, and save immortal souls.

3. Closely allied to the preceding point is the entertainment of romantic notions of the missionary work. The enterprise of converting this revolted world to God, is a sober reality. It is no quixotic undertaking, inspired by a heated imagination, and urged forward by the day dreams of a disordered fancy. Nor can it be carried on by any principle of a visionary enthusiasm, or a whimsical philosophy. There is far too much of stubborn fact in the difficulties, the dangers, and the discouragements to be encountered. It may even be questioned whether the best impulses of such a motive are capable of conducting its subjects through the most distant outworks of the citadel we have to storm—through the woods and marshes, the bogs and quagmires which are often to be passed in order to see the enemy in his strong holds, and find out the most important points of assault. How then can it be expected to carry them through the long, tedious, spirit-trying warfare with all that is perverse and wicked in the human heart, and all that is wily and daring in the devices of Satan?

It is to be hoped, however, that the halo of romance is, at last, too much dissipated for any considerate person to enter the field merely on such unsubstantial grounds as these. Some correct idea of the work, some sense of its importance and difficulty, we may reasonably suppose is entertained by most, if not all, who now offer their services to God and the church. Yet we greatly fear that not a few still allow their imaginations far more play, in contemplating this subject, than is consistent with truth, or conducive to usefulness. A sort of enchantment is spread over the missionary field, which makes it appear, after all, something like a fairy-land. Difficulties, dangers, discouragements, present themselves in such a romantic air that they wane into insignificance, and are treated as unreal; or the charm of suffering and toiling in a good cause, appears so fascinating in the distance, that the power of endurance is entirely over-rated in anticipation. On the other hand, all that is beautiful, and all that is grand in high enterprise and noble-daring, all that is good and amiable, and praise-worthy in virtuous conduct and holy effort, shines out with such overpowering lustre as quite to entrance the soul which, lost in the glare of apparent results, forgets or disregards the toils and conflicts through which they have been gained.

These views and feelings most completely prepare the missionary candidate for disappointment, and such disappointment as will be apt to overwhelm him with despondency, and unnerve his energies for any vigorous exertion. When he comes to stand upon the ground all such airy fancies will be found to vanish, and unless he has something more substantial to support him, with broken spirits and a quailing heart, he will shrink from difficulty, and flee from danger, as if aught of this kind had never entered into his estimates of the missionary life. Yea, he will be frightened at the rustling of a leaf, and flee when no man pursueth. Thus, ere long, his own security and his own comfort become the grand objects of his care, and he is so taken up with his health, his comfort, or his personal gratification, that his work, if ever he commenced it, is neglected; he is removed as far as possible from the sphere in which he could best discharge the duties of his commission, and wrapped up in the mantle of supreme selfishness. And will God, think you, smile upon such a missionary, or bless the interest with which he is connected?—No; should nature, all around him, thrive and bid him, too, to flourish, that man will wither beneath the frown of heaven. Nor is it likely that he will perish alone in his iniquity. The cause in which he is engaged will assuredly suffer, and God alone can tell where the consequences of his folly will end.

For out of this, you will readily perceive, may, nay, I had almost said certainly will grow another evil of the most fearful magnitude, that is to say:—

4. Carelessness and unfaithfulness in using means of support. These are a most sacred trust, and we cannot possibly guard their employment with too jealous an eye. They come not unfrequently from the poor, the widow, and the fatherless, and are therefore the fruits of their self-denial and devotion. What unthankfulness to squander the gifts, the very living of the destitute! They are from the treasury of the Lord. What sacrilege to divert them from their appropriate channel, and employ them for luxurious gratification or needless profusion! I have no reference to the slander that missionaries live in palaces and live like princes. All who know the truth, know the contrary, and those who will not believe upon the most abundant testimony, probably would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

But there are other ways in which missionaries may err in this matter. If, for instance, they choose a location more on account of its pleasantness, and the comforts with which it is surrounded, than for the sphere of usefulness it affords, or if they choose a more costly in preference to a more economical dwelling, merely because the site is more agreeable and fashionable, or the building more elegant and tasteful, though the difference may seem trifling and the object allowable, and though they may persuade themselves the time is not come for them to build the Lord's house, may not God justly demand of

them, "is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?"—But this is only a single illustration of the point in hand, and one perhaps, after all, not likely often to occur in fact. Yet it shows how easy it is to go astray, and when once astray all know how difficult it is to return into the path of duty. Perhaps we have all something to lament in this respect. At any rate those providences which have most signally afflicted the cause to which we are devoted, seem significantly to point to a great evil of this kind in one quarter or another. If we have not done the deed, we may have winked at those who did it. It is an awful thing thus to kick at the sacrifices of Jehovah, and make ourselves fat with the chiefest of the offerings of his people. For this sin, the sons of Eli were cut off, and even their father brought the judgment of heaven upon his house forever for the iniquity he knew, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

But there is a species of error, coming under this general description, to which missionaries in certain situations are peculiarly liable, and which, therefore, deserves a separate and more particular consideration. I mean:—

5. Turning aside from our great business to any other object of pursuit. This is certainly nothing less than unfaithfulness in the application of missionary funds. These we know are given for one specific purpose—the support of missionaries in the performance of missionary labor, that is, labor bearing as directly as may be on the conversion of benighted souls, and the moral and spiritual illumination of this dark world. If, therefore, we allow ourselves to be diverted in any measure from this simple and definite end, it matters not how good or important the object which draws our attention, we are unfaithful to our trust, and cannot expect the blessing of our King and Savior.

These remarks, of course, do not touch such subordinate work as is needful or important to the successful prosecution of our grand design. All literary labors and systems of instruction which bear directly on this point are not merely proper, but in a sense actually binding upon us.

It is easy to see, however, that this is a very perilous position. Especially if we have hard materials to work upon—men who have strong and unyielding prejudices, and these fortified by a show of science, falsely so called, it is extremely natural for our worldly minds to slip into the conclusion that these bulwarks of error and superstition must be swept away by the force of real learning, *before* we can expect to find an entrance for the truth as it is in Jesus. Thus literature comes to be substituted for the Bible, as if the Word of God was not more quick and powerful than the word of man, and even sharper than *any two-edged sword*. But such a perversion of our high calling has still more hurtful consequences. It may produce much unhappy feeling, and many painful conflicts between brethren whose

hearts ought to be knit together in love. A literary spirit is not the spirit of missions, and the effects of the exchange will be seen in the bitterness and rancour always manifested when critical acumen is more cherished than the love of souls. Forgetting that, at the best, all the productions of foreigners in a strange tongue must needs be imperfect, and endeavoring to correct each other's faults in charity and meekness, such men as missionaries may fall to biting and devouring one another on account of mistakes in the grammar and idiom of languages, in which none have reason to boast of their proficiency. This is just as if the Apostles and Evangelists had set themselves up as disputants concerning the comparative purity of the Greek used in the Gospels and Epistles, while even the Holy Ghost in infinite wisdom left them all to employ that kind of Greek, intelligible, though not pure, with which they were most familiar, and could employ to the best advantage. What a comment upon our superior taste and discernment! But, in truth, it is all vain jangling of those who have swerved from the path of duty, and affect to be literary pedants, instead of humble ambassadors of the meek and lowly Jesus. Nor can any of us expect a better end if we do not stick unto his testimonies, and give ourselves wholly to the performance of his work.

After noticing so many other reasons for the Divine displeasure, which it is supposed may be to a greater or less extent among missionaries, it will not appear strange that I should add:—

6. Inadequate concern for the salvation of souls. If men are to be found among us so deficient in principle, and so erratic in practice, as I have led you to imagine, then it cannot surprise you to intimate that the care of souls has not fired every bosom and weighed upon every spirit as it ought.

Indeed, independent of these things, there is much in the circumstances of the missionary, and the situation of those for whom he labors, to damp the ardor and relax the energies of the best and most devoted. It is difficult in the extreme for our poor natures and our weak graces, when once familiar with the blindness, the insensibility, and the obstinacy of heathen and mahometans, to maintain all the warmth of interest and tenderness of feeling for their spiritual welfare, which constitutes the missionary spirit, and is essential to the missionary character. If, therefore, we are not greatly on our guard, and especially if we do not habitually look up for assistance, we will most assuredly become dead to the spirit of our work. And if our concern for souls once ceases, we immediately lose all the high and commanding motives of the Gospel for self-consecration and devotion. We become mere worldlings, even in the prosecution of our heavenly calling. The glories and terrors of the eternal world wax dim to our spiritual vision, or fade away entirely from our sight. Whatever we may think proper to do for the body and for time, the undying man and the unchanging state are coldly overlooked, or unfeelingly neglected, and whatever we may achieve, the end of our commission is

not answered. Is this, then, the performance of missionary work? What if we cry up schools, and devote ourselves to secular and scientific instruction! What if we clothe the naked and feed the hungry! What if we train the mind and the body to all that is wholesome, refined, and elevating! If Christ is not faithfully, affectionately, and habitually preached; if the Gospel is not constantly inculcated, applied, and enforced; if the conscience is not enlightened, awakened, and warned; if every thing in our power is not done to convert and sanctify the soul, our labor is lost; we cannot expect God to bless it, and without his blessing it may be worse than useless. The richest earthly blessing may thus be turned into a curse. And let us not flatter ourselves that the curse will fall only on the head of these sheep. "Wo be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves. Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" Yea, wo is me *if I preach not the Gospel!*

But to sum up all these evils in one comprehensive description, or to point out the source from which they all flow, I must call your attention lastly:—

7. To a lack of the spirit of devotion. Prayer is as correctly as it is poetically called, "the Christian's vital breath." Just as far, therefore, as we lose the spirit of prayer, we cease to live the life of a Christian; all our graces languish, our souls verge to the shades of death, yea, our feet take hold on hell! Hence arises every species of spiritual decay. Our great enemy immediately gets the advantage over us. Our defence is departed. For the Lord will not protect those who shun his presence, or do not find delight in his communion, and love to walk beneath his shadow. Thus deserted of heaven, left to eat of the fruit of our own way, and exposed to the wiles of the adversary, the natural consequence is, that we wax worse and worse. There is no corruption in principle or practice to which we are not liable, and if not checked in our career, and restored by grace divine, there are no lengths to which we may not go in delusion and in sin. O! my brethren, into what an abyss may even the missionary thus be allowed to fall! The thought is enough to make the stoutest tremble, as the event is sufficient to make the ears of every one that heareth it to tingle. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

But, brethren, I hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though I thus speak. Still, it becomes us all to be ware of the danger as we would escape the catastrophe. The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe. This is our citadel. If we cling to the horns of the altar, all will be well; but if we let go our hold, ruin is inevitable.

Here, therefore, you will allow me to appeal to your hearts, and ask: How does this matter stand? Can our closets, the places of our secret retirement, bear witness to the fervor of our devotions? Is the spirit of grace and supplication manifested at the family altar,

in the social circle, and amid the hallowed exercises of the solemn assembly? Is its fragrance breathed through all our daily avocations? Does it float over all the scenes in which we move? If it does, then how sweet will be our tempers, how lovely and winning our carriage, how heavenly and elevating our conversation, how meekly we will bear correction and reproof, how tenderly we will expostulate with the erring, how humbly and affectionately we will strive to inform the ignorant and persuade the obstinate, how beautiful, consistent, and influential will be all the conduct of our lives. O, if we live in the Spirit let us walk in the Spirit. Then the Spirit shall take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us, and we shall know all that pertains to life and godliness, and become workmen that need not be ashamed.

Now, especially, we should abound in prayer, for the hand of God is upon us, and if we do not heed the stroke, He will punish us seven times more for our sins. As yet He seems to say: "Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver." Then He shall change his tone and declare: "I will come near to you to judgment. But who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth? For our God is a consuming fire!"

That, therefore, we may not only avert his present displeasure, and be prepared for the more fiery ordeal, but realize all the blessings of the Covenant ourselves, and become a blessing to all around us, let us strive to improve the afflictive dispensations with which He has visited us:—

1. By deep humility and self-abasement. This is doubtless the posture into which He would bring us. "That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done," saith the Lord God. Nor can we maintain any other posture with safety. So surely as our hearts are lifted up, it will be to our peril, if not to our destruction. But will any wait to be coolly reasoned into this frame? Why that one word of the Most High should break in pieces and melt the hardest heart. "All that thou hast done!" What piercing reflections must this sentence harrow up in the guilty soul. And who of us can plead entire innocence? We are verily guilty. And O how awful is the guilt implied in the slightest stain from the blood of souls. Think, for a moment, of the fatal consequences. How far has the missionary work been put back? How many hearts have been made to faint? How many hands have waxed feeble? How many souls have gone down to death unwarned? How many, for years to come, will have to tread in their steps? When you can answer these solemn enquiries with precision, you will have some adequate idea of this awfully awakening subject. Meanwhile our hearts must be hard indeed if the barest suggestion does not cover our faces with confusion, and make us wish to hide them in the dust.

But we should be equally on our guard against that spurious hu-

mility which lies in dark and melancholy views of the divine dispensations, and leads to cheerless if not plaintive musings on the present and hopeless forebodings of the future. This is only pride under another name, and is as displeasing to our God and Savior as it is fatal to our own peace and profit. True humility is one of the most engaging features of the gracious soul. While it melts down and removes every disposition to haughtiness and self-importance, it softens and smooths much if not all of the natural roughnesses and austerities of the character. It dispels the gloom of despondency, raises the drooping spirits, and lets in upon the feelings the genial light and warmth of heaven's Eternal Sun. Thus it quickens and invigorates every principle of activity and devotion.

This remark naturally leads us to notice another effect which should be produced by these humbling dispensations :—

2. Renewed self-consecration. We are not our own, for we are bought with a price. But this we are sadly prone to forget. Hence those grievous wanderings we have just been lamenting, and which we have reason to suppose have drawn down the Divine displeasure not only upon ourselves, but upon the cause to which we are devoted. O, then, while we remember our past deficiencies, and return into the path of duty with weeping and with supplications, come and let us join ourselves to the Lord by a perpetual covenant, that *shall not* be forgotten. Yea, let us make a full surrender. Are we indeed so thoroughly emptied of self as true humility supposes, then surely we ought to glorify God in our bodies and our spirits, which are his. And is it not high time for us to be absorbed in concern for the interests of his kingdom and the salvation of precious souls, and to labor for the promotion of these objects under the full realization of eternal things? In such circumstances, it will be well, expressly and formally, to renew our covenant engagements. If done in a holy spiritual manner, this will have a most reviving effect upon our hearts. At any rate, they should be solemnly recalled from day to day, and a deep impression of their reality and sacredness should be carried into all the avocations of life.

Thus we should put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and in no respect whatever make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. But this will evidently require :—

3. Increased and constant watchfulness. Let us not, for a moment, dream—as others are too apt to dream for us—that missionaries are not men, or certainly not men of like passions with themselves. I will not say that the missionary work is not calculated to promote, what we all know it requires, pre-eminent piety. I believe it is. But how? As idle dreamers would suppose, by a sort of undefined spiritual enchantment? Is there any direct influence in the circumstances in which we are placed to enwrap the soul in heavenly contemplations, to give it living and transforming views of eternal things, and to quicken its naturally sluggish pace, in the life of god-

liness and the ways of usefulness? The very reverse of this will be found, by experience, to be the sad reality. But as it is the agitation of the waters which purifies them, so it is the exercise of the graces that stimulates and strengthens them. Yes, depend upon it, if the missionary work tends to elevate the standard of piety, as it undoubtedly does when piety exists in life and vigor, it is by the severe—I had almost said desperate—trials and struggles to which it puts every principle of truth and fidelity in the soul. It requires the soldier to be fully armed not only, but ever wakeful and ever watchful, that he may stand always firm at his post, that he may press forward with ardor in his march, that he may not halt or falter on the way, and that he may not flee in the day of battle. Let us, therefore, put on the whole armor of God, and habitually watch unto prayer. Thus shall we “be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

G O D .

"Lo he goeth by me, but I see him not; he passeth on also, but I perceive him not."

"God is in every place, and all things are full of his majesty. The air, and earth, and waters, the swift tempest and gentle breeze—the storm and cloud and bright sunshine are full of him. Every star that shines, away in the distant universe, moves in him, and is guided by his power. The suns and planets of a thousand systems—all existences of all worlds are full of the all-pervading Deity, and dimly shadow forth the glory of his omnipotence. And the meanest creatures that are perceptible to vision—the smallest insect that is animated with the living principle, is not cast out from the presence of its exalted Maker, nor abandoned to the dark and cheerless empire of chance. From the highest intelligence that stands in the presence of God, encircled with the full effulgence of his glory, to the lowest reptile that shrinks from the light of day, all are pervaded by God, and exist in him. God is in every thing! But alas! we see him not. His presence is always with us, but we feel it not. His Spirit is in our hearts, speaking to us in the language of mercy, but we hear it not. Every hour he is reminding us by his providence of his gracious care and watchfulness, but we understand it not—or if we do, too soon forget it. Did we always feel his presence, the least thought or deed, or word, approaching to sin, would fill us with fear and shame. Could we entirely divest ourselves of the associations familiar to us, and when we go out at evening, instead of listening with a sort of pensive indifference, to the breathing wind, or the murmuring fountain, could hear in them the voice of God, and feel that we were surrounded by him, we should no more cherish unhallowed thoughts than we should use the language of profane impiety, when kneeling to receive a mother's prayer and blessing.

When the tempest is abroad, and God speaks in the thunder, and shines forth in the lightning, none are so careless as to trifle; and those who see in the Deity only an angry Judge, are often filled with trembling and dismay. But is God in the tempest, and not in the calm? Has not he who excited its wild tumult, power to guide or hush it when he will? He who sees in him a Father, knows that he is always in his power, and always safe,—and sees nothing to dread in the fierce lightning, more than in the sunshine; and at all times is equally fearful of offending so good a being.

There is fearful peril in forgetting God. The Bible every where inculcates the sentiment, that this is peculiarly offensive in the sight of heaven. To exclude men from eternal life, it is not necessary that they should be openly profane, or immoral, or open violaters of human and divine laws. It is enough that they forget God, and disregard his favor, and the work of their undoing is effectually accomplished."